

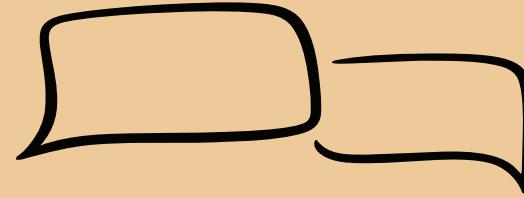
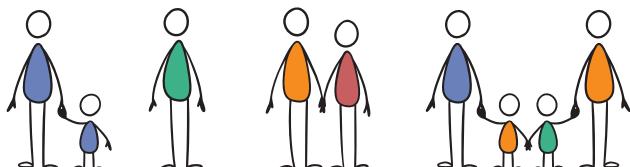
Who We Are

Small Cities Lab

The Small Cities Lab builds upon local knowledge to develop best practices, policy frameworks, and scalable solutions for small cities that are chronically under-studied and under-resourced.



Allentown faces a housing crisis. Rents have jumped **45%** since 2020, and more than half of our neighbors struggle to afford their homes. At the same time, many local churches are navigating declining membership and underused buildings. *Faith & Home* brings these challenges together into a solution: transforming church properties into affordable homes while keeping congregations vital and mission-focused.



Join the Conversation

Whether you're a congregation member, neighbor, renter, or community advocate, your voice matters in shaping faith-based housing. Together, we can transform underused spaces into thriving homes and build a more affordable Allentown.

Scan to participate in our survey



Learn more
and get involved:

hello@smallcitieslab.org

www.smallcitieslab.org

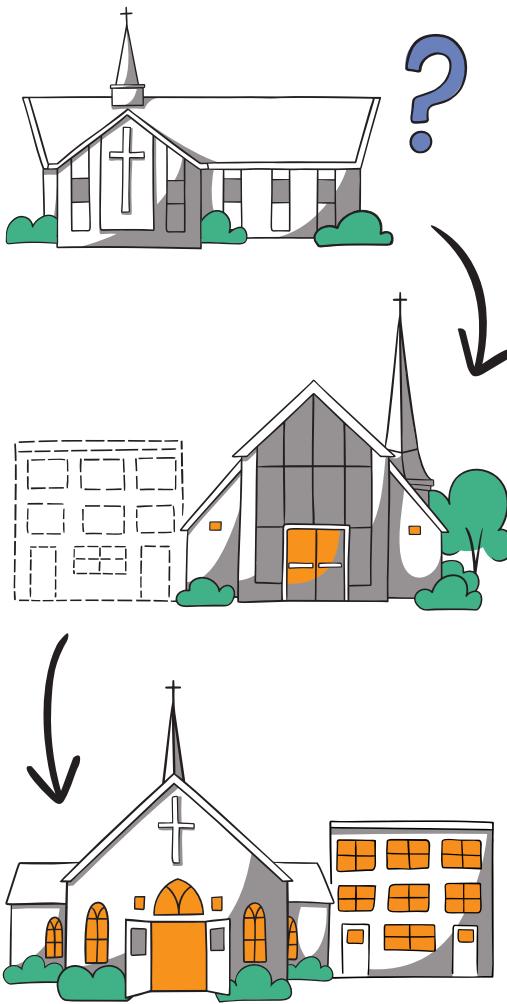


Faith and Home

Building Community Through
Affordable Housing



Small Cities Lab



Who This Serves

Faith & Home creates homes for the families and individuals struggling with Allentown's tight housing market—with **30-40%** of units reserved for lower-income households. It offers churches a pathway to remain vibrant community anchors. And it provides a replicable model that other Pennsylvania congregations can adapt.

A Partnership Rooted in Community

Faith & Home is a collaboration between the Lehigh Conference of Churches and Lehigh University's Small Cities Lab.

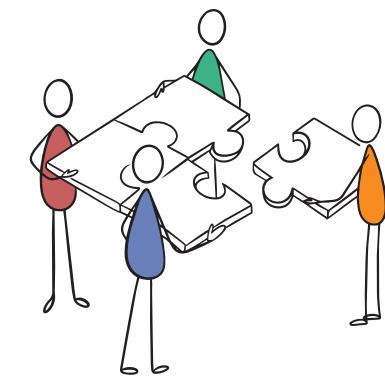
Since May 2024, we've been working with congregations across Allentown—including Redeemer Lutheran, St. Timothy Lutheran, First Presbyterian, The Barn, and Church of the Mediator—to explore how their land and buildings can serve our community's housing needs.



Our pilot project will create **6-12** affordable rental homes on a church site, blending housing with worship and community spaces. We've applied for state funding to make this vision real by 2026.

Building Together

What makes *Faith & Home* different? We're not just building housing—we're building consensus and understanding within congregations and neighborhoods. When a church faces change, its members confront profound questions about identity, legacy, and mission. *Faith & Home* honors these decisions through storytelling and community conversation. We're conducting oral history interviews with congregants, faith leaders, and neighbors—creating space for people to share their memories, values, and hopes for the future.



Through design workshops and community dialogues, we help congregations understand how their properties can continue serving their mission of caring for neighbors. Storytelling transforms abstract policy into lived experience, helping communities discern together what's possible and what's right. We believe the best solutions emerge when communities lead the process.